

DRAFT MINUTES

These are the Draft Minutes of the Agenda Conference of the North Plainfield Borough Council held on Monday, 14 February 2022.

Every attempt has been made to make these as comprehensive and conclusive as possible. However, as it is a draft document, it is not to be construed as a formal depiction of the official conduct of business and is subject to revision up to and following the Council's actual approval of same. If changes are necessary, revised minutes will be posted to the website.

MINUTES of the Agenda Conference of the Council of the Borough of North Plainfield held on Monday, **February 14, 2022** at 7:34 p.m. at the North Plainfield Community Center, 614 Greenbrook Road, North Plainfield, New Jersey.

PRESENT:

Council Members: Aimee Corzo
Suzette Given
Steven McIntyre
Everett Merrill, Council Vice President
Keiona R. Miller
Wendy Schaefer
Frank "Skip" Stabile, Council President

Also Present: Lawrence La Ronde, Mayor
David Hollod, Business Administrator
Phil George, Esq., Associate Borough Attorney
Patrick DeBlasio, Chief Financial Officer
Kathleen Intravartolo, Treasurer, CTC, QPA
Richard K. Phoenix, RMC, Borough Clerk
Stephanie Sherwood, RMC, CMR, Deputy Clerk

Mr. Phoenix read the following Notice of Compliance:

"This virtual meeting is being held in compliance with N.J.S.A. 10:4-6 et seq. Adequate notice of this meeting was provided by transmitting notice to the official newspapers of the Borough, The Courier News, WKMB Radio, WJLP-TV, the Alternative Press and also to the Star Ledger on February 7, 2022 and by posting a copy of this notice on the bulletin boards in the Municipal Building and the Memorial Library reserved for such purpose."

The Pledge to the Flag was led by Mr. Hollod.

All then joined in a moment of silence for the Men and Women serving in our Armed Forces.

PUBLIC COMMENT:

Frank D’Amore, 40 Willow Avenue, North Plainfield, recalled his comments from the January 24, 2022 meeting regarding possible property maintenance violations at 158 Greenbrook Road. The speaker asked if the council had looked into the possibility of overcrowding. Mr. Hollod indicated there was nothing to report. Mr. D’Amore called for stronger enforcement throughout the Borough.

Tommie Shider, 711 Anna Place, North Plainfield, shared his concerns over a recent sewer backup at his home on February 5, 2022. Noting that at least four other houses had experienced similar issues around that same time, he questioned if the recent storm could have contributed to the issues. Mr. Hollod assured that he would look into the matter.

Brandon Cheery, 707 Anna Place, North Plainfield, also voiced concerns with the sewer line, advising that he has had a plumber in four times over the last year. Mr. Hollod again confirmed that the matter would be investigated.

Tommie Shider, 711 Anna Place, North Plainfield, questioned if those residents affected would be eligible for compensation should the main line be confirmed as the issue. Mr. Hollod instructed the speaker to file a claim with his homeowner’s insurance. He may then file a Tort Claim with the Borough for any remaining out-of-pocket expenses.

NEW BUSINESS:

1. **Superintendent of Schools Michelle Aquino and Supervisor of Early Childhood Education Michelle Onofri** – E.M. Mr. Merrill reported that Dr. Aquino was in attendance to discuss President Biden’s visit to East End School on October 25, 2021. Dr. Aquino reported that the Board of Education partnered with several local child care centers in 2001 to provide a free half-day preschool program. PEA funding was awarded for full-day preschool in 2017 and the program continued to grow to include twelve full-day classes located within three elementary schools and two private providers. The Presidential visit was to highlight Universal Preschool and the Borough’s implementation of full-day PEA-funded preschool programming. The President’s visit was coordinated by Homeland Security, Secret Service, and the Presidential Office. Ms. Onofri detailed the preschool programming which provides an equitable learning experience for all district students. Mr. Felipe Luis, Assistant Superintendent, explained that the preschool program is available at East End School, Stonybrook School, West End School, Growing Tree School and Holy Cross Preschool. All council members shared their enthusiasm with the program and the Presidential visit.

2. **Discussion on Proposed 2022 Budget** – D.E.H. (Patrick DeBlasio, CFO and Kathleen Intravartolo, Treasurer, CTC, QPA, to be present) Mr. DeBlasio explained that as the Budget stands, the municipal tax rate would be 1.434 which would amount to an approximate increase of \$39.20 per homeowner. Approximately half of the surplus would be used to offset additional tax increases. We anticipate State aid will remain stable, although salaries, pensions, and insurance

costs have all increased. We continue to see a 97% tax collection rate which is superb. Mayor La Ronde indicated the Budget would be introduced at the February 28, 2022 meeting.

OLD BUSINESS: None.

REPORTS OF BOARDS, COMMITTEES, COMMISSIONS:

Mr. Merrill reported that the school mask mandate would end March 7.

Mr. McIntyre reported that the Historic Preservation Commission voted to approve the design of a new building to be constructed on the Yeshiva property.

Motion to adjourn by Ms. Miller, seconded by Mr. McIntyre and carried unanimously.

Meeting adjourned at 8:54 p.m.

Borough Clerk

Council President